

La Chispa 2024-2025

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La Chispa Playlist

If you have Spotify, click the link below to listen to a curated playlist while you flip (or scroll) through this year's edition.

2025 La Chispa Spotify Playlist



-Lola Yarrington

"This Morning I Woke Up Drowning in Sweat"

Dreams wash over me,

Memories flood fresh in the tide.

nimbostratus, blurry or maybe obscured.

I meet you, flowed into estuaries.

Brackish, I scoop you up in my hands.
You slip right through; I don't blame you.
I can't remember much
More than that.

It rolls over the mountain,
Glaciers melt into invisibility.
When I wake, I can't picture your face,
It's never been the same.

It isn't your fault, it isn't mine, it just is.

Marine stains under my eyes.

Gravity cuts clean through,

Clouds come down heavy.

-Kassia Ohlsen



- Sandro Bazan



-Kalyssa Fishman



-Jayden Kopacz

"The Ache You Left Behind."

A man, yet beautiful Am I allowed to cry?

Met in my eyes My anatomy is not good enough.

I heard you "Fix that, then, maybe."

He carries a sweetness in his voice. Really? ...Wait? ...Maybe...?

Brushed aside again Your effort hasn't shown up

What? I said I love you

I go back and forth You say Thank you, nice to hear

Right. Linear is what you are?

Not just passion How?

My eyes, you're distinct You ask for pleasure.

Your passion is nice

Am I just a wrapper to you?

But, longing for something other Seems so.

Why are you so warm? Despite the misery you caused

I'm room temperature to you. I hoped I never lost you

But, to me, you're mellow.

Amidst your venom.

You've caught me. I couldn't

You say, "Modify, maybe."

I would've rather slip away

Your words, unanchored I didn't care.

I long for delicacy I loved you

The delicacy you desire To the Moon and Saturn

"I love you." A once unbalanced love

"Thanks." It is now a matched bitterness.

-Jack Blue Aragon

"Blind"

An island lies
in the middle of a vast ocean
dark and deep
but there lies a lagoon
so clear and beautiful
that you can see the coral
and the soft sand

The people who live there
can't swim
but they want to learn
and Max is the only one
who can swim in the clear
water and
stay afloat

He gets in the water
every day to show off
by paddling his legs and
splashes the rest who watch
him

Max refuses to teach anyone
because he wants to be the
best

-Jayden Kopacz

He only swims in the lagoon
where all is calm
but one day he wanted
to prove that he can handle
anything
so he paddles and paddles
to where the clear lagoon

the sand is no longer there for his feet to touch

And he struggles
his arms are flailing
while the water is pulling him
down

No one can swim to save him so Max is there left to die because he was blind to what was beyond the lagoon.

-Ana Durán

"Forced Love"

Love.

How I love love.

The joy I feel when I have love.

I think about love all day.

The ping of love is a heart wrenching thing.

I would cut out my heart and

spill the blood in a cup for love.

The blood for love to drink and savor.

But people think I'm weird, and a freak.

So love runs from me,

I chase after my darling love.

Grabbing it and forcing it to be with me.

Cause I so desperately want love,

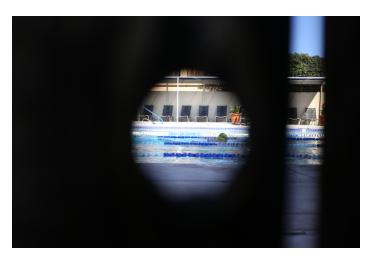
but it doesn't want me.

And then the one I love says "I hate you"

So slipping from my fingers

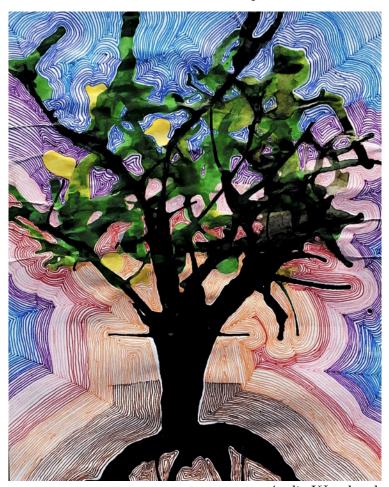
love runs from me, once more

-Ellie Garcia



-Auggie Miller

"Undone Beauty"



-Andie Woodcock

"Goodbye"

Let us roam the night together
A fright beats loneliness
Forever our hands interlock
Shocked from a simple kiss

Let us roam the night together and take what we deserve We will never say never Our voices will be heard

Let us roam the night together

As the sun starts to rise

The fleeting moon like our moments together

A teardrop in your eye.

-Anonymous

Prelude to the Sounds of Memory

thread, oil, and fabric sewn onto canvas

1: listen to the pieces others cannot see

they are just as important

2: listen to the pieces which have not revealed themselves

they are just as important

3: listen to the pieces you recognize

they are the many threads which dance together under moonlight

while you rest.

cottonwood leaf in front of sun, fall 2007



LET THEM SPEAK

-listen.



"I Ask You This Please, Please, Respond."

Lines of vines cover me

Where you left me,

The bees took me back

The tree's shade covers me like

You used to.

The light of the sun reminds me

Of your eyes

The pine needles show me your hair,

The rain brings you back to me.

I ask you this:

Why did you leave me for the

Vines

And the bees and the shade

Of the trees

And the sun's light and aging pine

Needles?

Why did you leave me for the

Rain?

I ask you this

But you don't respond.

The rain lied.

-Auggie Miller



-Donaven Gallegos



-Mariah Torres

"Lilac in October"

a gust blows through the gossamer, gauze billows up, a lilac scent, light on an October breeze.

i gaze around the room. your socks from the past week litter the floor, the sight of them raising a sigh from deep within, a gasping whisper.

i run my fingers over the bureau, only nearly touching the dust left there over too many weekends playing games, watching movies, sleeping late, rather than cleaning house. another guttural sigh, but only a whisper.

hearing your heavy footsteps on the stairs, i know a light would guide you more readily, but i enjoy seeing your face in dimness. the full moon's reflection in the mirror, brilliant through the curtain, might be just enough to admire your soulful eyes.

you inhale loudly as you enter the room looking for the light switch, desperate for it by the sound of your hitched gasp. a curse rings out, hardly under your breath, as you turn into the doorway.

i take in your eyes, their care and warmth, only slightly marred by wetness and your foul mouth as you curse again,

not even seeing the moon. with all my might i flutter the curtain

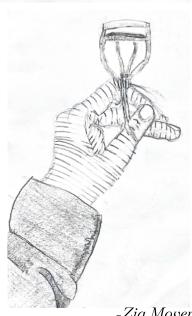
a moment before your hand flips the switch

and i'm gone, again

-Esperanza Plath



-Le'elage Melis



-Zia Moyer

"We call them ghosts"

they wander the roads at dawn,

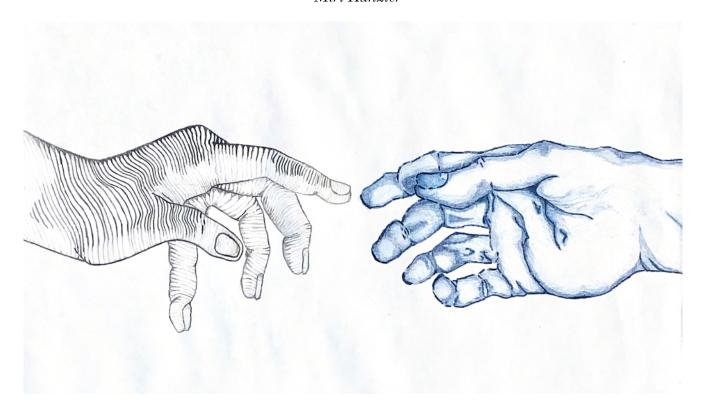
gazing wide eyed at the heaving breath of grocery stores, neighborhoods, and never ending roads. ones which have been built on: the very remnants of nourished blood held together by rough wrinkled skin. filled with a curdling feeling of peace, they watch the same people every day: stuck in blazing lines of traffic, playing in the rain, sleeping contentedly, exhaling their final breath. this breath, perplexed by the fine hum of life, travels along the thin layer of soil which coats the very remnants of: nourished blood held together by rough wrinkled skin. these remnants, wander the roads at dawn, inviting new perspectives of a home which no one ever owned. a home that changes with every last breath and every first breath. of old adobe torn down for mansions. of rivers dried and coated with asphalt. of walls built to divide, and torn down to connect.

they wander the roads at dawn.

holding their past within them, they gaze wide eyed as the future unravels its knotted chords of

blank and unlimited space.

-we call them ghosts; they are the core of this world
- Miri Künzler



-Kindell Custer

Words

Words

So many words

Sung by the birds

Yet little is heard

But the absence of words is absurd

I speak them yet I feel unheard

As if all my words are blurred

As if what I have spoken has never occurred

In their mind, all my words deferred

As if all my words are blurred

Feeling as if I slurred

All in shambles

They float through my brain

And still, they stay

Hidden away

They are like candles

They fade by the day

And like the wax

They gather

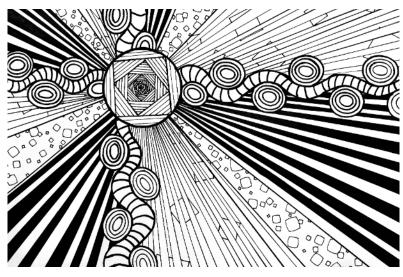
At the end of the night

Clumped together

Piece by piece

They fall apart

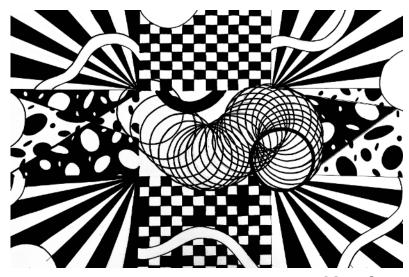
-Anonymous



-Eva Bolanos



-Marley Crump



-Mary Otero

"Pomegranates"

Pomegranates are hard to love

Because of

The messiness

The hard exterior

The patience it takes to handle them

But maybe they aren't hard to love at all

Maybe

no one has ever thought to stop and ask

why are they messy?

Why do they have a hard exterior?

Why do we need patience?

Why?

Maybe it's the effort

it's worth that patience

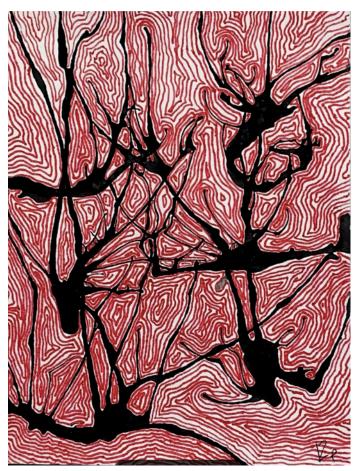
love was never about being easy

it's all about understanding

Taking the time to stop and understand

To stop and love them

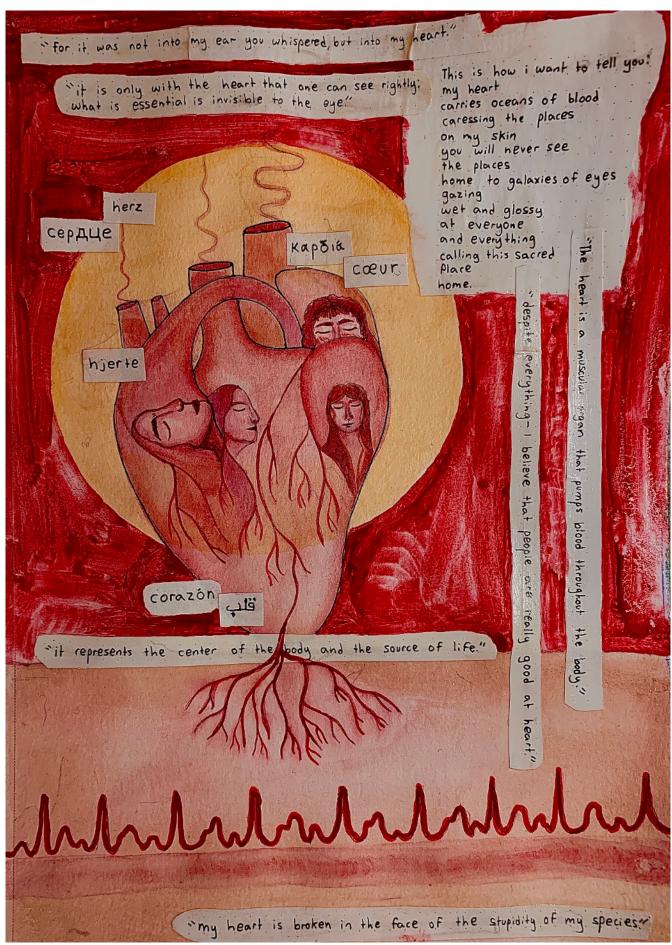
- Mya Maestas-Serna



-Mary Otero



-Mai'Li Vanderwoude



-Miri Künzler

Interpretive Translation of *La independencia (de Puerto Rico)*by Roque Salas Rivera

Period 1 Spanish 3

We are more passionate about holding onto our culture;

we are more than your dumping yard;
we'll keep moving past your barriers;
our culture runs deep;
we have more to offer than other nations;
we are human just like the rest of you;
we support ourselves;
we've endured your treatment;
we won't be swept away with time;

-Oliver Rich-Jackson and Mia Ortega

we are more brave than the suffering you put us through;

we are more beautiful than you think we are; we are better people because of what we dream of;

materialistic things do not define who we are; we will support ourselves before taking from you;

we show up for our people when the government doesn't;

we are much more than the standards you set for us,

and much more than America.

we are enough on this island.

- Camryn McWilliams and Briana Baldwin

we can't be our own enemy.

we must not belittle anyone else.

no matter how big we get we still have nothing still the worst part of the best country, they say we're a big part of what's wrong and a tiny part of what's right, but we're better than what you think of us, we're better than what we thought we were.

-Eliot Treme and Silas Becknell

we carry the knowledge of our communities, a community fighting for truth.

what you lack, you take from us.

with blood, you tell us stories.

we are hardworking people.

snakes that hide their motives

just for one small fraction of the world

just to know how easy it is

to take advantage of our open arms.

-Ethan Volzer and Gage Apodaca

Interpretive Translation of *La independencia (de Puerto Rico)*by Roque Salas Rivera

Period 1 Spanish 3

we are the foundation
that built you.
we protect you without discrimination.
our protection fades. you set the fire and
left us to burn.

- Matilda Scobee and Elizabeth Lewis

we're dying because of the situation you put us in.
the government is making our world worse.
look at what we have built,
we are taking care of our land.
look at what we planted,
the buildings we built,
the kids we raised,
the exponential things we finished.

-Reina Ball and Lexie Dixon

after all we've been through, we're still free,
even those who are constantly controlled by fear;
even with all the media;
even when you separate us from everyone else;
until you see what we've been through,
down in the trenches,
we benefit you but get nothing in return;
despite the difficulty, we have our people,
since we get nothing,
we're there for each other.

-Elsa Garcia-Wesley and Marley Crump

the truth is the truth. don't be scared of that.

we're told we're not supposed to be who and how we are,

the government takes our things and we don't even know

who you are.

put yourself in our shoes. Watch us struggle for our own identity.

we are more than just a number.

no matter how much you break us down,
we are still beautiful.

- All



-Lexi Dixon



-Bailey Mask

A man and a woman are sitting in a restaurant It's full of people It's so loud no one can hear what anyone is saying Everyone is wearing smiling masks Everyone is happy Because they're smiling A smiling waiter in a smiling mask walks over to the table Smiling he says, How's everybody feeling tonight? The smiling woman says "Wonderful. I'm feeling wonderful." Smiling, the waiter says, "What would you like to eat? The man looks down at the menu The menu smiles back at him "I'm not sure" The smiling man says

"Well why not?" The smiling waiter asks

The smiling man answers

"Because all this menu says is smiling."

The woman smiles at the man

"Well it's obvious dear! Everybody and everything

is just so happy?"

The man in the smiling mask looks at the woman

"No they're not
They're just wearing masks"
He lifts up the woman's mask
Her mouth is drooping down
Her eyes glisten with tears

Her eyebrows are pushed together and tensed

No one ever shows they're real feelings in the restaurant.

-Anonymous



-Jonas Mahboub

The nights of your heart wait for someone like me to thread the void of time We both created We are waiting...
Believe us when we say we, too, ache to imagine something new

-Claudio Perez

I am who I am because I...
believe it
or at least pretty sure
Decent to great friend
occasional hater
chronic creative
and some what silly
It gets deeper than that
but that's a lot to write about
It's too much!

-Anonymous

The flower petals "Seeds of Resistance" Floating down onto the ground choice fades from her palm Dandelion wish Freedom slips away for the - Sage D.S Seeds of Resistance - Finnian Forsyth "For Sophie" at ojo or on Wishing on a star the road, laughing or sobbing, lost by the constellations together with you I am lost in space - Sutherland Jaramillo - Katya Ivanchov Stare at the water you look at your reflection the fish make ripples - Eve Buehler The literature It cries to humanity pages worn with tears I will close my eyes - William Butcher and see the ocean rising quiet in deep thought - Miri Künzler Print my lifeless words Living my life through my ink I hear water drip I have found escape Drip, drip, drip never ending - Hide In this dark, dark, room "Forbidden Love" - Devyn Bradbury Gentle frosted tips Your sweater carries my soul Drowned in your sweet love

- Eliot Treme

I haven't been here
I've been locked away in my
Room- to wonder why
- Anonymous

Cool water, whiplash
Pin-pricked blood cells, vicious red
The sound of church bells
- Anonymous

The river runs through
The woods carrying all that
Drifts upon the stream
- Miles Moya

You wish to save us
Your responsibility
You will save yourself
- Dys Romero

"Bird, Why do You Sing?"

For the sky is filled with smog
Please carry your song
- Mia McDougal

The moon shines so bright

Her light shines to all in time

That the world sees her

- Anonymous

"Aren't I Supposed to ...?"

Write about feelings,
My raw, weeps, sobs, and whatnot?
Art hurts, it's chronic.

- Ryder Tregembo

"Moving On"

As the wind blows through each cloud beckons me to come to eternal sea

- Miri Künzler

"Her"

The people chose he we the people, he or her we can't choose a her - Finnian Forsyth

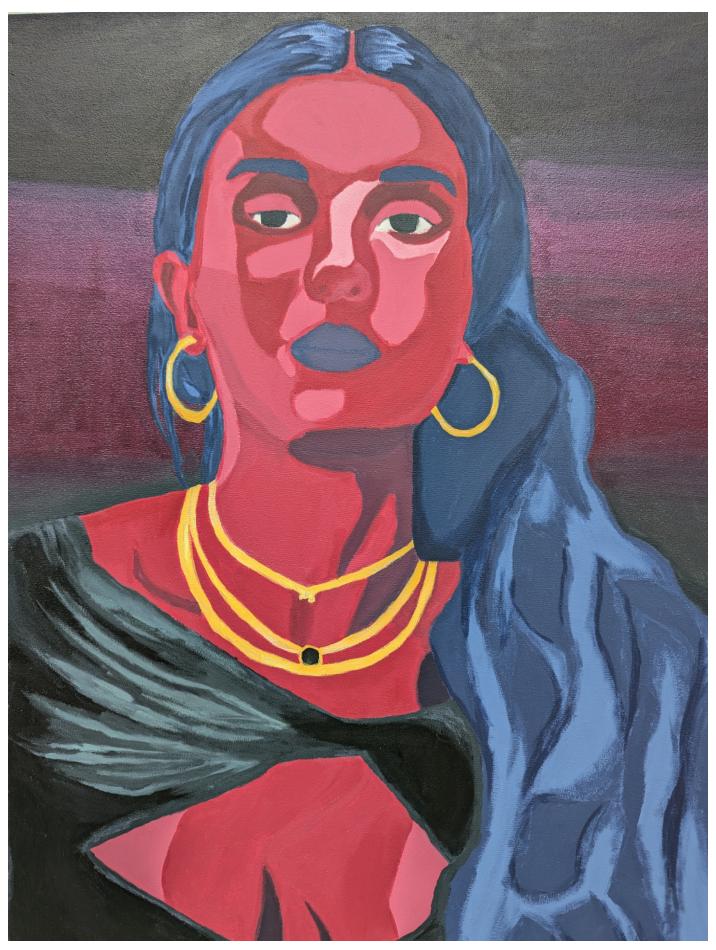
"You With The Grey Shoes"

I notice you with

The grey shoes and braided hair.

You might see me too

- Auggie Miller



-Isa Roberts

"Achlys Touch"

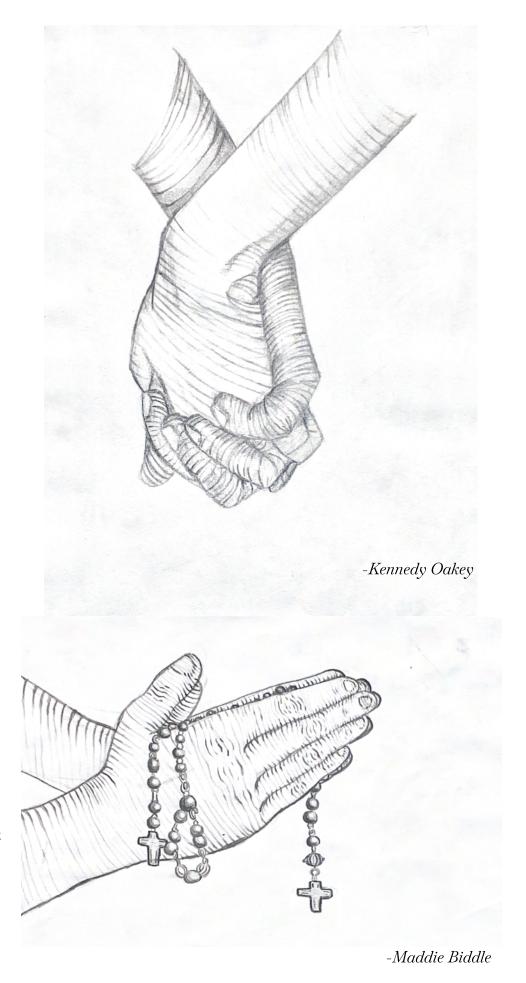
I wish you didn't give me your heart because as I held it, all I could think of was crushing it.

I wish you didn't
jump when I did,
leaving not just me,
but both of us
splattered on the rocks.

I wish you didn't take my hand and follow me to our ruin with a smile on your face.

I wish I could blame you
for what we became
even though at the end,
you were the only thing right
about you and me.

-Olivia Rack





-Leo Hubenthal

"you don't even know my name"

I see you every day.

I see when you laugh with your friends,

And what kind of things you think are funny.

I see you answer questions confidently

While staying humble.

You get along with most people.

No matter how different they are from you.

You take interest

In problems in the community.

When people are hurt you're the first one to help them up.

When someone is begging on the street

You give them whatever you have.

People see you in a good light.

You make friends easily.

I know so much about you,

And the things you do.

But every time I look at you,

I feel pain

Because I know

You don't even know my name.

-Fiona Andrews

The sun setting on my plan.

Ideas broken but not gone

Changed-shifted-perspective of tomorrow

The sun may be setting on today but the

Morning is coming

-Andie Woodcock



-Parker Volkman



"Song of Myself"

What is comfort? Perhaps it is the solace in knowing you are loved, and cherished.

Perhaps it is the rhythmic beat of a strong heart

or the way said heart provides life and breath to another.

Maybe comfort is what you chose it to be.

It is in the choices you make and the freedoms you have.

Perhaps it is a warm shower after a long day.

Feeling the rain-like drizzle on my back is cleansing. The intimate comfort of the water washes over me, leaving nothing to be desired.

Leaving only peace in the form of rivulets on my misty skin.

Perhaps comfort is in the stillness of the air or the warmth of the hearth.

It is standing under the flickering flame of autumn leaves speckling the sky. A soft sweater wrapped around me like an embrace.

Perhaps comfort blooms in the darkness of the night.

Snuggled under the blankets, I feel the safety and love that is fleeting during the daytime hours.

Feeling the soft fabric against my legs is a reassurance.

It leads me to a sound and dreamless sleep.

Maybe unabashed comfort only exists in soft moments without pressure.

I cannot say what comfort truly is. To appreciate it, one must first be without it.

Only then is true comfort obtained.

- Lucy Tyroler

"It's the Grand Pumpkin, Ricardo Ricardo"

EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - NIGHT

Two schmucks, Ricardo (dressed up as Spider-Man) and Amir (dressed up as Linus), sit alone in a pumpkin patch.

RICARDO

So what're we doing here?

AMIR

Why waiting for the Grand Pumpkin of course.

RICARDO

No, but like what do I tell people?

AMIR

That you're waiting for the Grand Pumpkin.

RICARDO

I can't say that they'll start calling me names again. You know, why're we even calling him the Grand Pumpkin?

AMIR

He's grand.

RICARDO

Why not great?

AMIR

Great Pumpkin was copywrote.

RICARDO

Is copywrote a word.

AMIR

Past tense of copyright.

RICARDO

Not copyrighted?

AMIR

Wrong write, dumbass.

RICARDO

No!

AMIR

Yes! Because you're copying writing. Like stealing words.

RICARDO

That doesn't make any sense. It's because you have the right to copy something.

AMIR

"Righted" sounds wrong though. That shouldn't be in past tense.

RICARDO

Well, that's because God didn't intend that word to be used like that.

AMIR

God didn't create the English language.

RICARDO

Shaddup. God doesn't like copyright law.

(pause)

He supports piracy too, by the way.

AMIR

That makes sense.

They pause.

RICARDO

So what do I tell people?

AMIR

About what?

RICARDO

My halloween whereabouts.

AMIR

Just say you watched a movie and gave out candy.

RICARDO

I did that last year. They said I can't repeat activities.

AMIR

Who's they?

RICARDO

My church friends.

AMIR

You go to church?

RICARDO

Yeah, that's where I participate in my annual trunk or treat.

AMIR

How come I didn't know you volunteered at church?

RICARDO

Volunteer?

AMIR

Do you get paid to give kids candy? RICARDO

I'm not giving kids candy.

AMIR

Then what do you do?

RICARDO

I trunk and treat.

AMIR

Ricardo.

RICARDO

Amir.

AMIR

You can't be trunk or treating at this age. Maybe--MAYBE--you can be trick or treating, but you certainly cannot be trunk or treating.

RICARDO

Trunk or treating isn't a verb Amir.

AMIR

Don't try to change to the subject dude, we just did a bit about making things verbs.

RICARDO

Well whatever, I don't see a problem with trunk or treating at my age.

AMIR

Ricardo, how old are the volunteers?

RICARDO

I dunno sixteen max.

AMIR

Ricar--

RICARDO

God has gifted me years and years of trunk or treating, why must I subject myself to only fourteen.

AMIR

Because making fifteen year-olds giving you candy is pathetic, dude.

RICARDO

See not if you do it the right way. Like last year, I wore a Nelson costume and walked around with an empty carton of eggs.

AMIR

So you're bullying religious 15 year-old volunteers into giving you candy.

RICARDO

No. I'm trunk or treating.

AMIR

This is sad. You've taken away all of my halloween spirit.

RICARDO

Lets do something then, It's 2:00 and this pumpkin patch is cold.

AMIR

But what about the great--I mean grand--pumpkin.

RICARDO

If I can't trunk or treat, you can't believe in The Good Pumpkin

AMIR

He's grand! Not just good!

RICARDO

Wouldn't that be funny. The Good Doctor but about a pumpkin.

AMIR

I dislike everything about you.

RICARDO

Why don't we go to a party.

AMIR

We don't get invited to those.

RICARDO

See, that's unfair. I can bob more apples than the average human being.

AMIR

I don't think that's what they do there.

RICARDO

Well, anyways, Toby said we can go to a UNM party with him if we want. Toby and people don't know that we're annoying yet.

AMIR

Those are my favorite people!

AMIR (CONT'D)

Wait, if it's 2:00 wouldn't the parties be like over-ish.

RICARDO

I assume it's like Jesse's house in season four of Breaking Bad.

AMIR

Those were meth heads, Ricardo.

RICARDO

Whatever, lets just crash the party and then find something to do.

Amir and Ricardo bolt out of the patch, but the camera stays. We see a dark figure emerge from the shadows, THE PRETTY GOOD PUMPKIN.

THE PRETTY GOOD PUMPKIN Where did my boys go?

FIN.

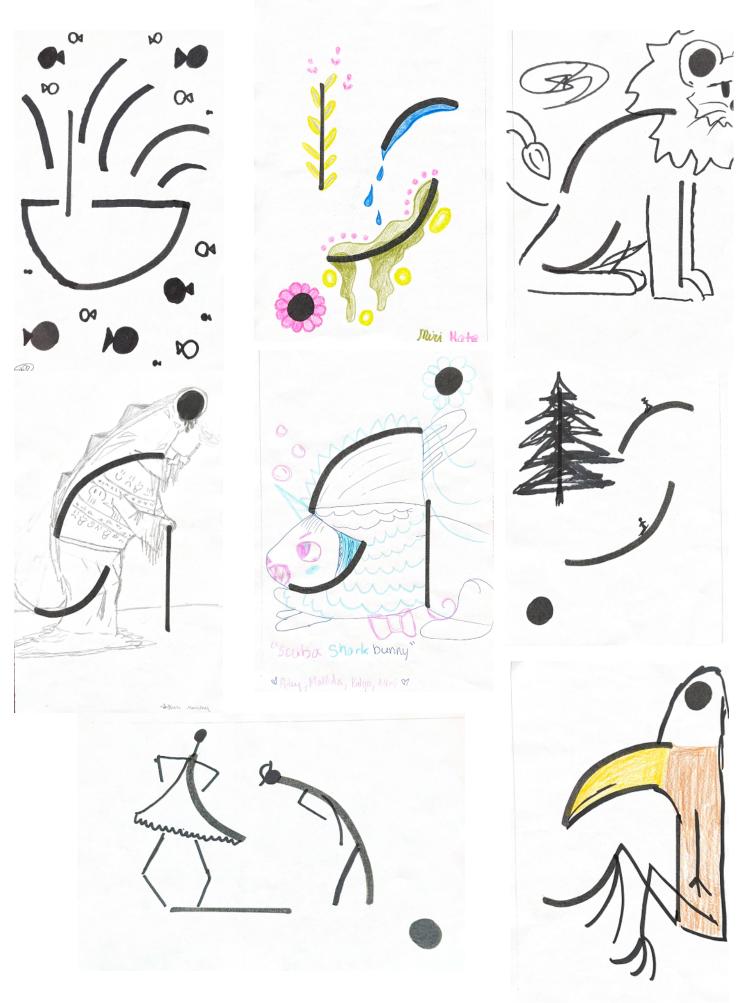
-Brothers Bazan (Liam and Sandro)

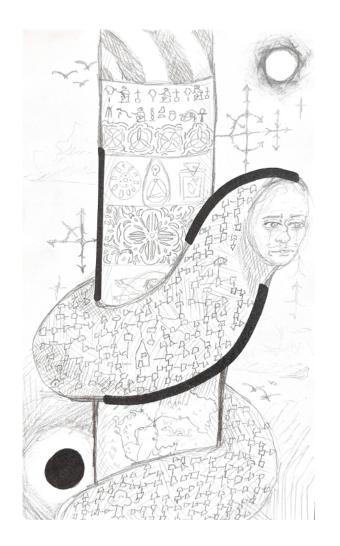
It's too loud. These, my thoughts as I sit, calmly, quietly, wishing to leave and to stay, but feeling as though I can do neither. Encompassed by a sea of noise, I am an Island, screams hit me like a current of joy and fear, a school torn into factions, an arena. Gladiators of red and blue tear each other apart. A meaningless game. Friends by any other day look upon each other as enemies, as scum. Our school, if for one day only, ravaged by undos. A conflict woven through our past and future by a single thread, that today becomes our noose, I know this terror means nothing, that it will be gone tomorrow, but it is real. Their screams echo through the chambers of my mind, my sanity protected by a single whisper. It's too loud.

-Liam Yarrington



- Eve Buehler









"Loving a Vampire"

You rip my heart out and make my eyes bleed, And I'm loving every piece of it.

I lay on the floor from your 'love' wanting more.

You're a vampire and I'm your victim. I can't help it.

Your red lips, my blood on your fingertips.

Kisses and bites, you'll love me till I'm dead. What a fright!

Our first night under the new moon you said,

"Love me now or else you're dead," before dragging me off to bed.

I lay flat as a possum under your grip, you enthrall me with fear.

Your hip digs into me and you bring your head quite near,

"Oh dear, don't be afraid, it'll only hurt a little."

That morning I woke up in the hospital.

And you sat on my gurney and I instantly spewed, "I love you,"

Practically forced it out of me. Your cherry hair moves up and down to approve.

So now I know, my body is your canvas and my blood your paint.

My pain is proof of our love...right? Even if I faint?

You twist me around your finger, wrapping, violently wrapping me more and more,

But dare I say no and you'll 'love' me even more. My guts and gore, yours forevermore.

I'm your whore to play with.

I'm your toy to break.

You're my puppet master pulling and stringing my veins.

I drain the thoughts of breaking free. You control me.

I love the brain trauma you give, it never leaves my mind, always staying by my side, Just like you! The girl who drinks my blood like wine, she's mine all mine.

When I close my eyes and dream at night—mares and horses red and black trample me. Just like you, when you 'love' me and break my back.

I can't live without the pain, I need you.

I will let you do anything, it's true.

Each day with you is hell, But when hell is warm why rebel?

- William Butcher



- Jayden Kopacz



-Kindell Custer



"The Clouds Are Darker Now"

I sit atop the stones of those who came before Before all of what we know Adrianne sings like the sweetest moment of life As all harmony and peace sing along. Is the breath of our mother a disruption, or a warning? I write within the pages crafted by those who care On the land of which they once called home For it was stripped from them as swiftly as this ink flows from my pen They took such good care of her, our mother why couldn't we?

The clouds are darker now.

-Finnian Forsyth

Aspen leaves shimmer Hear the peace they bring to us Things will be OK

-Jon Toman

Covered in sawdust All in my hair and my clothes And creeped in my nose



-Ana Durán



-Mo Moya -Landon Maestas

"Distance"

This distance between us

I know you feel it, too

It's a nebulous smorgasbord of obstacles

I can't cross it by simply walking or driving through it

I don't even understand it

Distance is quiet and doesn't ask for my attention

It wants me to forget about you

It buries itself beneath the chaos in my life

Feasting on my indifference and fear

I don't know how to get past it, and even if I did, I don't know what I'd do when I got to you

This love I have for you has to travel this distance

I have a burning need to put my love into action that's gone unattended to

Could you meet me halfway?

Can we take this on together?

How about we just start moving towards each other?

We can figure everything else out later

-Liam Andrews



-Ryder Tregembo



-Avery Anderson



-Dys Romero



-Ryder Tregembo



-Meredith Staples

"In search of lost time"

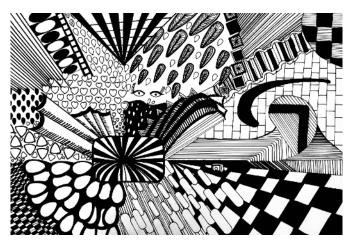
In search of lost time
I touch the grass fondly
Searching for something never to find
A name nameless, a breathless sigh
Teardrop in my eye.

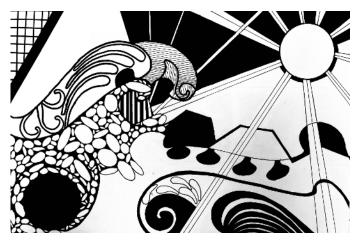
The world around me darkens
An effort to get up is nigh
So I am doomed, under this moon
And new forced to lie

Lie down on this grass, not the conniving type
You wouldn't know you're the master
Lying through your words
I never knew until I looked into your eyes,

As I rot in this grass, a corpse trapped
I am free from your harm. Free from the world
In this stitched-together minute
Searching for lost time

-Anonymous





-Bailey Mask -Cam Lucero

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"Reflections"

by Miri Künzler

"Reflections are only fragments of our past selves-" she whispers to me in the sacred churning mist, glowing like stars from the sun shining through each and every ripple. My reflection is scattered. Broken up by the coarse yet fluid movement and grunting of waves. Every now and then, a cloud will intersect my eye, the shadow of a hawk will abstract my face, the colors of dried and cracked cottonwood leaves will blend into my hair. Every second, every movement, every reflection, every bubble, I am someone different.

"No one will ever know me the way you do-" the gentle words fly out of my mouth, landing on her clear skin with a splash as a flock of ducks would after a tiresome flight. The sun shakes as she tosses and turns, and once again my reflection scatters. I think of the parts of myself flowing on the surface of the waters downstream. The parts forgotten, or the parts simply needing to fly away. See the world from a different perspective. Continue to move on. And then there are parts still rooted deep within my gut. I can feel these identities twisting around my spine, running down my tailbone and forging into the river sand below me. They are fragments of my soul, learning and growing beyond my field of vision; just outside my periphery. Not even my reflection, liberated and dancing free form across the humming waters of the Rio Grande can show these intricacies of self.

"No one will ever know you the way you do-" she gurgles.

"We are only your witnesses; you will never see yourself the way we, the elements of the world see you."

When I return home from excursions to the river flowing less than a mile from my own bed, I wash my hands in the bathroom. Dried mud lining my cuticles flows off under the warm water screaming out of the tap. Gazing at myself in the mirror, my reflection is clear and sharp- a completely different person than that of the river reflection. This reflection is intensely accurate. A microscope dissecting the very pores on my cheeks, veins in my eyes, and cracks in my lips. This reflection is a world in and of itself; separate from the clouds, shadows of hawks, colors of cottonwoods, and movements of the sun.

Reflections are only fragments of our past selves. Through the intensity of this bathroom mirror, I can almost see the thought moving across my forehead, resting just above my eyebrow. Reflections are only fragments of our past selves.

I gaze into the mirror for too long. Long enough to begin contemplating who I am. Long enough to become trapped in a cycle of mascara, lip stick, and acne treatments. Long enough, to focus solely on my reflection, which has already changed the five minutes I have stood in front of the bathroom mirror. I am change. In all of its abstract glory and perplexity. My reflection is grounded in the world. In the river. Dancing to her own music freely with the clouds, colors of world, and galaxies of stars. These presences: the river and the other beings surrounding me, see me in ways I will never and can never see myself. My reflection, the way I look, is my temple. My being, the way I feel is my life. And in this way, my reflections are only fragments of my past selves.



-Miri Künzler

Before I drop, Shining a decaying smile of yellow teeth drain my veins as my sluggish fear and creeping hope I want to hang limp and loose remind me so I may feel what empty really is That you might have been right If, when I fall So that when you pull me close Let it be and dry me out unless instead you want to When nothings left except Twist my limbs, digging nails into the skin your scent in my nose where beneath you'll find a soul When it gets so close and let it drip into your eyes When that suffocating pressure stops Then freely, I can hang again And you save me as Bones in a sack of I'll lay there Limp and loose Tears that drip into your mouth, which savours the taste of salt and fear Until you wrap me up And my lungs will fill with the color of your lips My eyes might focus, Light like the strawberries eyelashes might curl to snag you You promised me bring you with me show what pain is and isn't And while here I rest And trace upon your body While I consume the taste of you lines burned by rope, While water tries to rinse me of your sins Under the heavy cargo of hate

On a noose dipped in red Claiming a taste of love

where you'll know what it means to hang

The red salt stays on my tongue

Flavoured like a delicacy

And as it moves through my body,

A slick texture down my throat

Repairing the pieces you left broken

And the ones I chose not to fix

As it acts as Glue, that weighs me down, fills my broken glass

Half full, and then more

As I finally feel fulfilled by your love

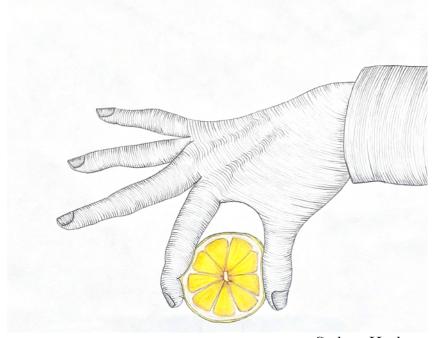
When again my stomach rips,

Those hours lost

And you watch

me fall.

-Olivia Maria Chavez



-Sydney Hepburn



-Lola Yarrington

"Small Life fka. Disappearing"

I break the ice in the bucket,
defrost before the sun,
daily routines, comfort kept in a safe,
finding the bumps in eggshell white,
might see me on a run.

Breathing is the hardest when you can see it too, feel the throb in my chest.

Rosy cheeks, condensation,

bite at my fingers underneath. Open my hands, never mind,

settle for thumb wars in my pocket.

The birds wake me up,
a sleep where I say that I'm at peace,
somewhere in-between the truth.

A crunch under my feet,

never meant to hurt any of the leaves, tip-toeing to the porch,

turn the light off

and let the dogs out.

My foot sinks in the sand,

I need new ground

to lay out this diagram.

I've learnt that a chest

isn't enough, my head

moving up and down,

breathing with your love, unstable and

impatient. Something of the type,

but never quite like this.

When you bring my eyes

to your breasts, and you moan in my neck,

there's a feeling in my chest -

something so excessive

but not enough to swallow my gum.

I'm saying sorry in advance and picking up all my life

and turn down all the lights,

"see you never" is a promise

because trees and teas

never really needed me.

Flickering of the lamp,

clicking of the stove,

a dull spot on my palm,

through time, low and slow.

Sipping, feel the leaves through

my fingers, remember your eyes.

It's the white walls, with

windowsill geraniums,

patient in the chair,

steam higher than the weed smoke.

Staring at the evergreens,

fresher than the toothpaste

that circles the drain.

That frost slips off the needles

in my thumbs.

Watch me grow Momma,

my knees - stuck in a classroom.

Forgiving, swaying with
the world around,
not quite hiding away.

Fallen in the snow, grabbing at my skis, writhing in the get up - kind of claustrophobic. I've got my feet to the roof of this car, not enough space for this, there's tears in a dam, even more to spill over. Don't even have to say, not quite swirling, ricochet off the walls. Too many fingers in too many lies, walking a new line, that was never meant to be perfected. Primary source, the stars in the sky; the same in your eyes felt secondary. Ask me about favorites and I'll start to trip, walking hand-in-hand I'd stutter on concrete cracks. In the clay, something so fragile, run my finger somewhere in-between.

Stains at the bottom of the cup, it's still looking dead.

Every wash, and I'm still

learning to toss the same dregs. Put in the compost out back, next to a greenhouse with a stool, somewhere silent. No breeze to whisper sour Autumn nothings in my ear. Stay here to journal, trying to stay in the lines. Softly, with my words, a diagram of a chrysanthemum. Write a new reality, weathered both of my hands. Cooking for Claire, the leftovers, stood still in the heart. Fried eggs, salt and pepper, soften the butter, I can't believe. Simplicity, somewhere in myself, finding reciprocity.

When I think about me,
I barely think about me, thinking of my
relationships - what's the puzzle piece,
the thread, or bed that we're sleeping in?
Seeing the memories, only spare for some.
All the eyes, texts, and shared spoons,
soft words, softer lips, even more, their hips.
Imaginary flowers at your door,
pressed in a book, hopefully forever.
Again, watching you paint the stage with
your hair. I still think about,
finger to your thumb around your wrist,

looking around, it's okay, it's you and me.
We could heal, oatmeal or a lemonade,
by the window, anxiety tug at
my pursed lips, try to speak out what can I do for you?
Hopeless, restless, and fretting,
blur the lines in between us,
see when I think about me...

Through the windows, a world lives out forever. In the mountain, one more ant, in the march.

Purple wildflowers, all that stands between

the peaks, blending snow with the sun, angels feed this flame.

Refractions, the light bends, curve through this house, onto the fridge.

Something organized, a taste of the stars in my hands.

Lean on the kitchen counter, counting my breaths, comes back around.

Couldn't paint the view, got oil on my hands, shirt, face, elbows, you should have seen.

A scene with no focus, a whole different lifestyle.

Feel the shadows grow on the leaves,

an aphid, bigger than you and me, calm in the palm of another.

Pushed by mouths, but wandering myself, glance across striped floors. I've seen the hair over your shoulders, the eye contact for a second more. Brush my arm, never again, I guess. One foot out of so many doors, caught standing in the hallway, run away, it's faster this way. Got rejected two weeks ago, but she didn't even know how I felt. A slow text, and a stare, a deep breath against the heartbeat, asynchronous there. Read the page over and again, see the words but can't take the meaning. I said I try not to repeat them, but it's the same visions between my yearning. They see me wandering, distant,

A lone table, with a lone lamp.
tall glass, water with the fluoride.
Tired of foggy reflections in the window,
a clunk and a click for the lock.
Readjusting.

I'm empathetic, promise,

give me a season, you'll feel it.

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A breeze on my limbs, a slow creep from the night. Sillouhettes and odd sounds, not a bulb in sight. The world falls still, no moonlight but you find a path, stuttering over big boots on wool socks. Feeling this moment through my hands. As if snow, the world slows for moments, for times like me.

With no star to focus, and no landmark to reach, I'll sit idle by.

Hands clutching for my waist, warmth is approaching infinity.

I say I'm at peace but it's

still that same dread.

-Ryder Tregembo





-Mila Stefanovic



-Kendra Sandoval

"In Search of Lost Time"

In search of lost time
I touch the grass fondly
Searching for something never to find
A name nameless, a breathless sigh
Teardrop in my eye.

The world around me darkens

An effort to get up is nigh

So I am doomed, under this moon

And new forced to lie

Lie down on this grass, not the conniving type
You wouldn't know you're the master
Lying through your words
I never knew until I looked into your eyes,

As I rot in this grass, a corpse trapped
I am free from your harm. Free from the world
In this stitched-together minute
Searching for lost time

- Anonymous

"The Party of Life"

Won't you celebrate with me?

On this day so serene

The brights and big city

Fulfill all of your dreams

The sun shines brightly and the grass sparkles green

You're not alone or hidden, all can be seen

The party glitters with life

Youth and joy run rampant, lacking strife

So don't be full of dismay

or leave and go away

be happy you are alive today

Won't you celebrate with me?

-Anonymous



-Ruth Chavez

"Got no strings" - From the Phobias short story collection

You grip his hand tightly. You don't want to go into the shop. He laughs and assures you'll be okay. She comes up from behind, you have to go in to buy the doll for the project. You open your mouth to speak but go inside anyway, pulled by an invisible string. He lets go of your hand and goes over to a shelf to inspect an antique. She walks past you to look at the treasures behind the counter. *They* watch you as you slowly walk into the aisle you came for. It's against your will. You could've picked a different project. *Their* glassy eyes follow you.

No no, they can't move on their own...

Joints at their mouth hold their faces in frozen, uncanny, jeering grins.

No no, they can't move on their own...

You feel your hands shake and you freeze in the center of the aisle.

Are they beginning to rise?

Or are you only seeing things?

Your stomach churns. No, no-

THERE!

THAT ONE MOVED!!

Your heart begins to race. No, no-

THAT STRING!

THOSE EYES!

You cover your mouth to hold in the scream. Something touches your back and you scream as the wooden hand raises to reach your face, She laughs as you stumble back into a shelf. Then, *they* descend.

No no, they can't move on their own...

Falling off the shelf, entangling you in *their* cords and wood. Every way you turn, *they* are watching. You fall to the ground, pulled down by the weight of your body

You slump like *they* do.

You rise at his hand like they do.

You only move at his motion like *they* do.

He pulls you out of the mess of puppets and asks if you're okay. How can you answer? You raise your hands and feel your jaw. You swear you had joints there before, like *them*.

No no, they can't move on their own...

You open your mouth to speak voluntarily and look down. You scream.

THEY ARE HOLDING ON!

They can't be alive- THEY ARE ALIVE!

THEY HAVE YOUR LEG!!

He picks you up as you fall back, unable to support your own body. She gathers the *puppets* from the ground, placing *them* back on the shelf. *They* watch as he carries you out from the aisle.

No no, they can't move on their own...

She pauses and selects a doll for the project. The one with the painted face and wooden hands. The one with a patterned dress and rosy cheeks. The blue eyed one.

Not that one. Why would she pick that one.

They watch as she leaves with one of their own.

No no, they can't move on their own...

They smile wider. You blink.

No no, they can't move on their own...

They haven't moved. You blink. THERE!

They haven't moved. They can't move, he says.

No no, they can't move on their own...

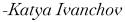
He leads you out of the shop. He says to wait here while he goes in to pay for the project. You stare at the window as he leaves you.

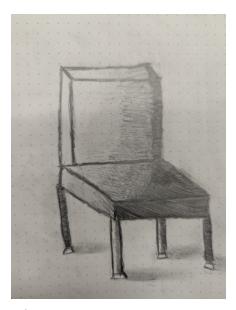
They did move, didn't they.

They didn't sit in the window before...

right?

How chilling.





-Caetano Torrez



-Cadence Lanier

"My Life Is In the Toilet: The Richard Nixon Story"

I can't take it anymore. I'm president of the United States of America, as high as you can go, and I still have to deal with this . This isn't supposed to happen to me anymore. I won. I am the great American hero, a triumphant tale for children everywhere. And I still get constipated. My sweaty anus has become one with this toilet.

I can hear Henry Kissinger breathing heavily outside. His toes clack on the cold White House tile in quick succession; it's almost as if he's dancing. I can't breathe correctly, and Henry tap dances. I am in the , and that fat is—as the kids say—getting his groove on. Such are the trials of the Orthogonian man. Beans, brains, and brawn. I can't take this. I'm going to ask him. Wait, what if he becomes suspicious of my situation? Leaders don't get constipated. He surely knows that. Was Alexander the Great constipated when he conquered Persia? No. Was Abraham Lincoln constipated when he gave the Gettysburg Address? No. Leaders don't get constipated. I'm going to ask him because I can't take this click-clacking. That's what it is. That's what's making me neurotic: his shoes.

"Henry, is that you out there?" I ask.

"Ves."

"Well, what're you doing?"

"I... nothing. I'm valking," Kissinger stutters.

"Very well," I tell him. This is doing a pee-pee dance, isn't he? The president is constipated, and the national security advisor does the pee-pee dance. Has this house always been a joke? Why the hell was I elected? I sit on this throne, this sticky, stinky throne, for thirty more minutes. I strip naked, maybe this will help. I can't take this anymore. No normal person has ever sat on the toilet for this long. Nobody! Why can't I be normal? Why can't they love me? Why?

I wish my daddy loved me.

Plop. Plop. Plop.

Oh my god, finally. The gates to my lungs finally open, and I can sigh, a deep sigh, a man's sigh. Kissinger is still outside. His shoes still clack. He can wait a few more minutes. I need to decompress; I'm the president for God's sake. "Richard," Kissinger says. "Are zhou steel in zhere?"

"Yes, Henry." I tell him.

"I need it too, Richard. Couldzou hurry?"

"Why not use the other ones?"

"Julie is in there. Un lady scares me, Richard."

"You're," I sigh. "Scared of my daughter, Henry?"

"She has your eyes, Richard," explained Kissinger. "Unnatural on und lady."

"You're scared because of her eyes, Henry."

"Und cheekbones too."

"We still have thirty-three other toilets, Henry. We have sinks too."

"They all steel smell like Lyndon B. Johnson."

"This is true. His odor is inescapable." I grumble. "Okay, Henry. I will be out of here soon; just wait acro-"

Plop. Plop. Plop.

I uncontrollably belt out a moan, a girl's moan, not a man's moan—a man's moan is a grunt, an urgh. Why do I do this? I'm president of the United States, and I'm arguing about the toilet. I'm moaning. Why do I do this?

"What was zhat, Richard?" shrieked Kissinger.

"A pooping noise," I reassure him. "A man, a real man's pooping noise."

"Zat vas no pooping noise. I'm coming in."

"So help me God, Henry. If you--" He breaks the door with a very quick SLAM. He sees me. Oh, lord. He sees me, all of me. I don't want him to. Please stop Henry. Momma, make him stop, please. I don't want him to judge me. I don't want him to hit me. I don't want his eyes. I know I'm not Arthur, but please, someone help, please. His eyes initially glued to my chest, the hair, he watches the hair. They move downward, those entrapping four eyes. They focus downward. I feel great shame.

"May I pee now?"

"Can I wipe first?"

"Ves zhat makes sense."

I wipe my butt quickly, intensely. Kissinger turns around to not look at me. He still watches me in the mirror; I know he does; there's no way he isn't watching me. I feel pain all over. Momma I just wanted to be a good, proud dog. I gather my clothes in a ball and waddle out. "Henry," I look into his eyes. "It was a pooping noise. I make pooping noises."

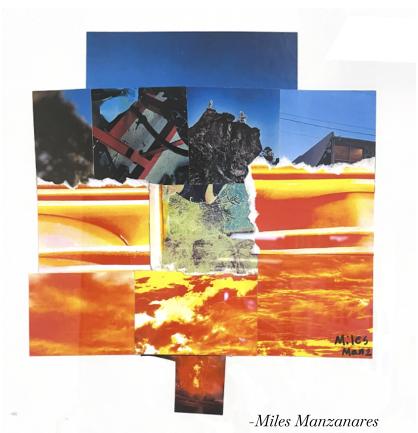
"Und sorry, Richard."

"Henry, do you still want to bomb Cambodia later?"

"Oh, ah well." He stares downward again. "I'm a little tired today, Dick." That last word freezes in his throat. His words are stretched, his eyes are peeled, and he finally catches himself. "Maybe, maybe tomorrow."

"Ah yes, I understand," I cowardly mumble. I hate my job so much. I wish I were the king of the world. People would like me then.

-Liam Bazan



The moon fades behind The clouds so that you can sense Her presence by light

-Miles Moya

Square of sunshine fends Off the shadows and darkness Of everyday life

-Brian Tregembo

Stillness in a leaf is like the stillness of you fleeting thus perfect

-SQ



-Adelyn Orwix



-Leo Hubenthal

"Who we are within"

Laws cannot erase who we are within our souls dignity endures

-Finnian Forsyth



-Bailey Mask





-Jadon Provoost -Ashadu Ball

"Dried Blood"

The beats run slow as the pump dies out
The blood rushing through my veins
runs cold
The heart once intact

The clots of my soul bunching
Twisting my arteries
Creating a piece of my body
You will never see
I fear that I will not recover

Is blistered and broken into bits

That is until I hear their laugh across the room

The simple sound

It spark the shallow beats of my heart
I know that it will never happen

My heart may begin to beat for you

But it will soon die out

The spark will never create a flame

The scars of the past dripping slowly

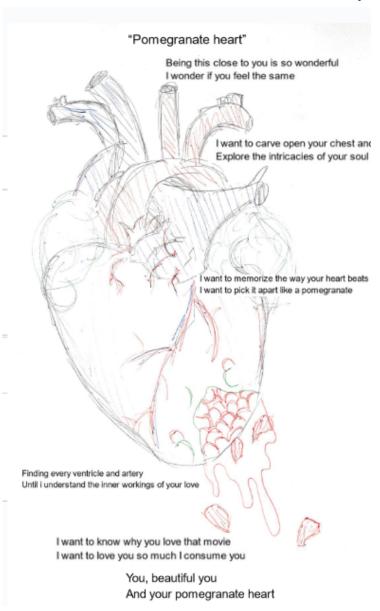
No one wants the damage goods

It slowly drips on the hopefully spark
Watching you eyes fall in love with another
The smoke of the wounds bleed into the air
The dried blood covers the once again
Broken bits of my heart.

- Kindell Custer



-Nora Clark-Slakey



-Mo Moya

"Know you never had a chance"

To the girl beneath my ribs
aching for a chance to see a glimpse of light
a beauty in sorrow
the girl with dreams as high as skyscrapers
just not as high as the sky
that girl who leaped too quickly
to see the good in connection
indulging in the wrong
places
like a predator afraid of prey
she is fearful
of the prison she has made

To the girl
with the hate of a thousand people
a heart pumping blood
that poisons its own mind
a sabotage more savage than the word trojan
illusioned to believe

her veins would be safe
from sharp soft blades
like teeth on a shark
she never had a chance
And though we're made to choose
to pick right and wrong
or to stay silent in fear
rather than fearing the silence
to choose and escape out of chains we make
when we're convinced they're safer
than fresh air
though she raised a part of herself
to save her own skin in a time of need
she never had a choice

So ask her how to survive knowing from afar she never had a chance

- Olivia Maria Chavez



-Auggie Miller



-Auggie Miller





- Sophia Quintana

-Eamon Cummins

"Crickets!"

You're so beautiful, but I can't quite remember.

My hands were cupped around my heart while it bled through my skin so I couldn't trace out your face gently.

If I go to the river and hold them out, would it all wash away?

Would you grab my hand and chase even if they're cold?

There's a day where I run my fingers along your soul.

Every ridge of my fingertips will remember the bumps and imperfections on your face.

They'll be left with an orange tint from the makeup that you wear.

Even if my hands are left with oil, sweat, blood, and dead skin - anything to be this close.

I love your eyes. I think they're green - maybe they're brown.

When I have the chance I'll go star gazing, look for Sagittarius

and run my finger along the beauty. You just caught me at a bad time.

I'm holding things in both of my hands, but now I have to get my keys out to open the door.

Even though I've merely planted the seeds, the wisteria is already wrapping around my heart, and braiding itself in my hair.

If we wait here for a little while, it'll reach out and we can braid flowers right through each other.

- Ryder Tregembo

"The Ballroom Ghosts"

Dancing with a ghost,
blood spatters over me
Despite all their troubles
I didn't think ghosts could still bleed.

Dancing with a ghost,
in reality, it's
all just in my head
And I'm stomping over graves.

The graves were once spotless

perfect, holy

the endless drip of blood

Slips into tarnished fragility

Dancing with
the translucent coryphée
Looking into the distance
Seeing through hazy steam

One day they will float away

From me

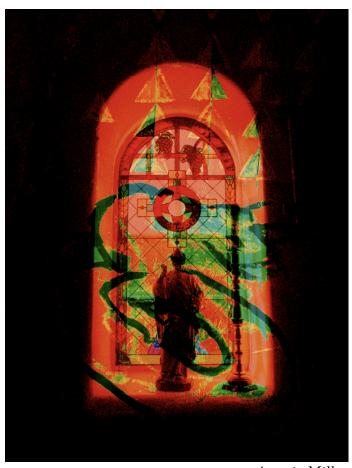
For now, I'll stay dancing

Slowly, waiting

- Eve Buehler



-Maximo Baca



-Auggie Miller



-Kassia Ohlsen

"Beware of the Secret Villain"

The scariest creation of all is not hard to find

It can be seen while you're simply living your life

One can not easily comprehend these beasts

They try their hardest to make their actions discreet and undetectable

While also shoving themselves into the psyche of as

many people as possible

They pretend to care about you

While they exploit you for everything you have
Some choose to give in and join them
Others try desperately to avoid them
They can't be destroyed
They're built to last longer than any one of us
That's why every time I'm advertised to
I begin to feel sick

-Liam Andrews

Interpretive Translation of La independencia (de Puerto Rico) by Roque Salas Rivera

Period 8 Spanish 3

we are not as meek as the melting snow;
we are not as worthless as a cemetery of cars;
we are more fierce than the howling winds;
we are more vast than the rivers and oceans;
we are greater than these tyrannies;
we are more loving than the world's roots;
we are softer than the moist moss;
we are more loving than the trembling
downpour;
we are stronger than the times that
surrounds us;

-Brazill Dornburg and Avery Sims

we shouldn't make anyone feel insignificant.

you want us to have a small life
and you see us as five parts,
you see us as the minority,
that we are the least of all the least
and very little of the majority,
but we are more than what you think,
more than what you imagine,
and until today, we are more than
what we are imagining ourselves to be.

we shouldn't shame anyone.

we are braver than fear;
we are better natural than rich;
our life is more fulfilling than the
standard;
our roots will bring us fortune;
we will defend our land;
we will right your wrongs;
we are more than enough,
and we are more than you could dream of;
we are living, not surviving.

-Madi Garcia, Cam Lucero, Elly Hering

we are our own history
and our blood is a part
of yours [history]
we are a bunch tied
from expanding as a people
enduring through
the punishment destined to us from birth,
waiting to be accepted
by the world.

-Maximo Baca, Jason Nawarskas

-Ana Durán and Zara Trafton

Interpretive Translation of La independencia (de Puerto Rico) by Roque Salas Rivera

Period 8 Spanish 3

we are the outline of the calculations
by the rich. we are the suffering
demographic, what you call
"touching the bottom."
we are the fortress without the Spaniards,
the core that gets rid of the crusaders.

-David Rubin and Ryan Hubbard

it's said we are violent,
but we brought the end of the war
and the government that created it.
we are prominent in the coast,
but not in the mountains.
because of that, we show our culture
in the buildings we construct,
the children we raise,
and the resumes we submit.

-Josiah Henderson and Antony Taylor

we are different from you,
even when challenged by the overflowing
of more colonization;
even in the bakery full of new news;
even in ignorantly calling us just an
island;
even after seeing our faces,
we joined the blocks of cement,
built warehouses by our neighbors
but even after all that,
you leave us behind,
leaving us with no option but to

send resources to our own people.
it has always been us in the distance.

-Logan Lemons and Ryan Nivanh

don't fear the truth of what we've experienced.

we've wasted our lives fearing each other while the rich take our country, stealing our identities.

notice us! acknowledge us!
we won't be here long.
can't you see the truth?
can't you see our value?
why are you treating us this way?

-AII

Connectivity Between Realms of Perspective

oil on canvas

Heat sticks to my lungs, tar drips down my esophagus,

breathe. they say, they sing

Your body is a temple, don't ruin, don't discard, only we decide.

they sing, they say

this land is ours this water these creatures OURS

your body

OURS

This heat, this tar clogging my breath

"BREATHE" they say



-Miri Künzler

"Hold your breath" - from the Phobias short story collection

You smile at the goldfish from the fair. Plastic bag full of water and your new little friend.

How exciting!

You pause and examine the fish. Is it supposed to just sit there?

Your face is pressed into the bag.

You cannot breathe.

You begin to panic.

You cannot breathe.

The fish is at your eye level.

You cannot breathe.

The fish is dead.

How did you not see it before?

It doesn't matter.

you.

cannot.

breathe.

You scream into the plastic bag of water. You bite down on the plastic.

How foolish.

Water and dead fish rush into your mouth.

You begin to choke.

You cannot breathe.

There's a dead fair goldfish in your mouth.

You cannot breathe.

Who pushed you into the bag and caused this occurrence?

It doesn't matter.

you.

cannot.

breathe.

A firm hand hits your back. You cough. The bag comes away from your face. Your mother asks you what happened. You can only continue to cough and choke while you cry. You could have died. Your mother hugs you but you push away. You could have died. No smothering hugs. No more risk of choking. The goldfish died. You look at the ground where the ripped bag, spilled water, and fish lay. The goldfish couldn't breathe. You couldn't breathe. Air has never been so precious you realize. The fear you might be choked, smothered and unable to breathe causes you to wail. Your mother misinterprets. Let's go get a new fish. A new bag. bag. plastic bag. no. more. air. You stare wide eyed at the fish. No more air for your late pet. No more air for YOU. Your mother goes to comfort you again. Her hands reaching. You panic. You scream.

Would your own mother choke you now?

Would she steal your precious air?

Mother doesn't realize your fear and keeps coming.

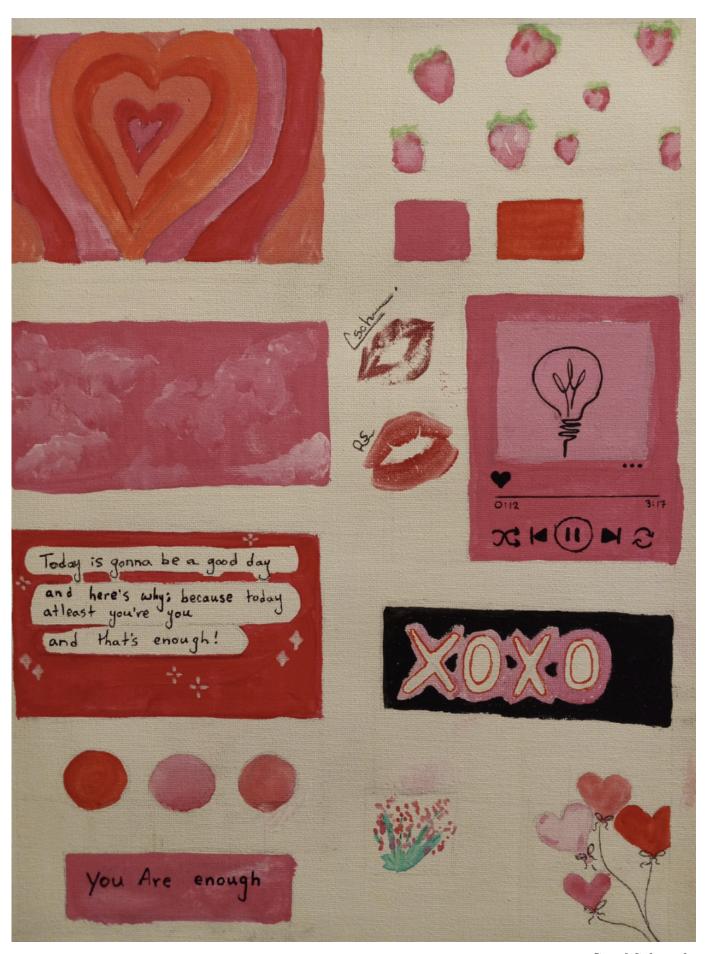
She hasn't even touched you and you cough.

cough.

She hugs you and you scream. Her embrace is too much. Too much. No air. No AIR. NO. AIR.

How chilling.

-Katya Ivanchov



-Coral Schroeder

My head is a room

With four black walls and a box

Holding my true thoughts

-Fiona Andrews

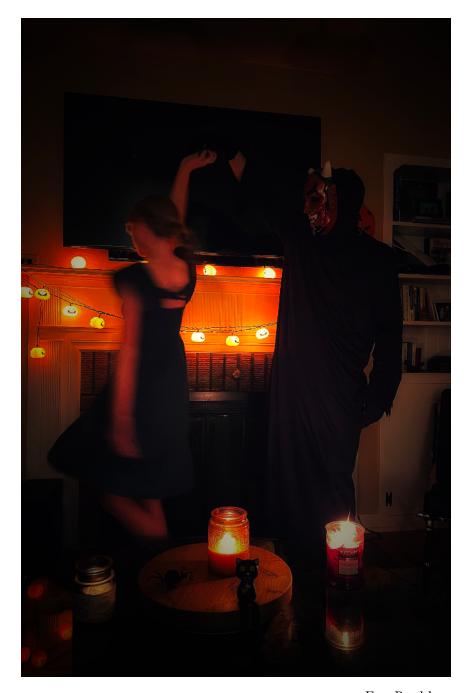
You make me spiral
You loved me then you didn't
I am done with you

-Caleb Penrose

I woke up, sadly
This place is familiar
Maybe I am home
-Dys Romero

Why write poetry
When I make electrons dance?
Exams are boring

-Amy James



-Eve Buehler

"Flash Fiction #1"

Written collaboratively by Advanced English Seminar

In that one moment, everything I knew to be true changed. I could feel the seed sprouting inside my gut – protruding itself where it was not wanted – beautiful and grotesque. I felt this unending fear that all I was and all that I hoped to be was slipping into a fantasy. I had swallowed the pit on an apple tree whole. I felt lost as the expectation of the tree I envisioned myself becoming faded away. The only clarity to my despair was the thought of burning the sprout inside of me. I hoped to eliminate the sprout, the fantasy – no, not fantasy, nightmare. It wasn't just any nightmare . . . Suddenly my skin became bark, but I was stronger than I'd ever been. I was turning into a tree beast. My human mind and thoughts were being over-written, all I wanted was to disappear into the forest. So I did. Never to be seen again.

"A Poem to the Unknowns"

From starbucks to dancing for what felt like the greatest moment of life, to tears; a picture that cannot explain the battles and challenges one can face, hours, minutes, even seconds before the click of a camera. But what is told through this simple click is the best friendship a person could ask for, being set in stone. A day to never forget. Engraved in your brain, every detail of that beautifully-saddening day. Marking the beginning of a lifelong friend, sister even. From your greatest support to your best laughs, all stemming from one extraordinary captain, full of not only joy and kindness to spread to all others, but also full of life. An answer to the hardest question; What is the meaning of life? A question I never had the answer to; until this fateful day. The meaning? The point? Life's purpose? To give you challenges you never thought you could face, never come back from. But then you're handed a beautiful person, inside and out, to lift you up and face all life's challenges right there. Always by your side no questions asked. No answers needed. The start of unknown trails and obstacles thrown your way; with the one person needed to succor you through it. Forever, and forever always.

The unknown is frightful. And from a mere click, you'd have never guessed what was to come. Never imagined the unimaginable. From the bigs of winning Nationals. To the smalls of acing that spanish test you spent hours on end studying for. To even the bad. Almost failing a class or even falling into rather grim coping mechanisms. The unknown is truly a magnificent horror. Who'd have thought life's greatest challenges at the snap of a finger would be choreography in one routine. To the next moment having the breakup blues. Fear of what else is to come. A picture. A dream of the future. Shattered into a million pieces. Then to the worst break up. One that you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy. The cracks. The gashes. All the way to the gut wrenching loss of someone who was once your second half. Leading to your national dreams. Together no more. To the worst moments of your life but also some of the best. A trip to remember, but not always for the good. To the unknowings of more friendships, more possibilities. Sprouted. In action. To the greatest people you'd ever meet, and some you regret. To the craziest of holidays, with the oddest of groups.

To the amazing counselor with the kindest of hearts and sweetest of words, always there to help with all of life's challenges or even listen to your random, sometimes silly thoughts. To the rekindling of a three year friendship with your sister inside and out. Who was always willing to drop anything for you. With no care for college parties when her "little freshie" or "little 9th grader" calls at the most obscure hours. Always willing to stay up past midnight just to talk and do daily activities. For hours and hours; building yet another beautiful, and forever comical relationship with someone to love for all eternity. To losing yet another close friend; whose mom would consider you her second daughter. And to forever hold onto those memories that you cherish and miss every second, of every hour, of every day. To the building of yet another tender, heartwarming friendship. That you'd find yourself growing even closer with over the summer. The girl who can read your mind inside and out. Finish your sentences and is always there to pick you up from the downs of a sport you once loved; that you now find yourself falling out of love with.

The seed sprouting. Seeds of hatred, for something that once brought you ultimate peace. Leading to some of the best and worst competitions. Some to win. And some to lose. Sometimes with the people you once worked so serenely with. All to end on a rather bittersweet note. Not always good. But not always bad. That's the unknown. The unknowns of "The Crew" and the quests you'd happen upon. Until you know it, a new year is upon us. And all but one of your bestest friends are off to college. About to start anew.

Preparing for the upcoming graduation of your bestest friend, your sister. Preparing for the goodbye you know is to come. Taking in all the moments you share together before the end. The end that you are so terrified of and not ready to accept. The refusal to say goodbye. To let go of your soul sister. The person who knows you inside and out. The person who's been to your house millions of times yet has met your parents once. The amazing soul that has met your insanely chunky hedgehog, who's extremely anti-social yet loves loves her almost as much as you do.

To the plot twist of getting that little sister you always dreamed of. Perhaps not by blood, but by heart. Getting to be that positive influence that you've gotten from your soul sisters and expressing it onto your beautiful amazing gem of a friend whose family considers you family. To all those crazy bathroom convos and movie trips with one of your closest friends. That you always knew but never knew. Until that fateful math class; finally crossing your paths. And the unexpected friendships made on a two day field trip. Filled with some of the craziest emotions with even crazier experiences. With the memories that'll last a lifetime. And of course the unseen encounters to haunt your thoughts for years to come.

But also the unknown of those years. The silent battles you face, never to talk about. The battles that others are facing at this very moment; right here. With you. The need to know there are people. You have people. So many. Right in this untold, unseen, unknown, moment. Never knowing what's next to come. Who you'll end up meeting. What you'll end up doing.

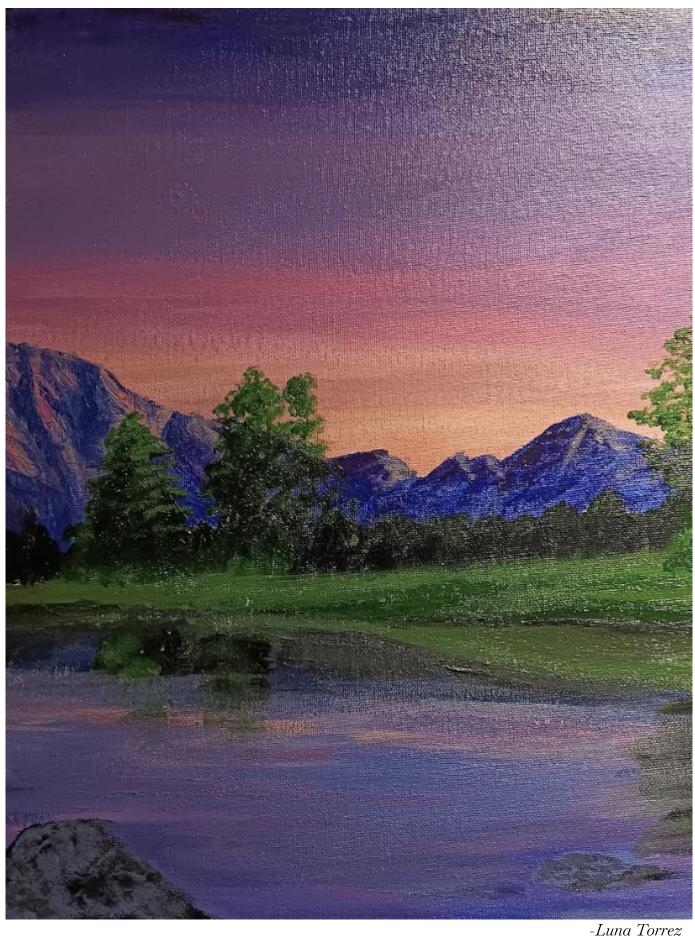
Who knows if your dreams of attending Hofstra University to then becoming an Art Therapist will come true. Only time will tell. And I'm sure whatever happens will be for the best; because there's always something to look forward to even in the toughest of times (thanks for that reminder Ms. Lee). Of course the unknown is scary and honestly really terrifying but there's always something, someone worth fighting for. There's always life worth living. Because "Some people may have it worse, but no one should have it bad." - Matilda J. Diggelman. Life is short. Too short.

To truly live is to take in each moment, for this life is meant for you. Was made for you. The unknown is what keeps you going, so don't let go of something just because it's scary. In the words of Noah Kahan and Lana Del Rey,

'Don't take yourself seriously' - NK. 'Cause when you know you know' - LDR.

Or as I like to say,

Не воспринимай себя всерьез. Когда ты знаешь, что знаешь. - Cam Lucero



into rosy light, and he watched the gold and purple and rose mingle until the pure light of early day overspread the heavens. He watched the planet of Love sink deeper and deeper into the bosom of morning, and then he turned his gaze to the chamber window through which the light stole to kiss the pale, sweet rate of his love. All night he had waited for the morning. Do not the sunbeams whisper to her: "He waits!"

At last she comes. He hastens to meet her, to take her hand in his and lead her to the arbor.

"Evelyn, my Evelyn," he whispers. "And may I press my lips upon thine? I swear to thee they are worthy. Again thou turnest pale. Does fear mingle with thy love that thou shrinkest from the kiss that will make thee nine of ?"

and downcast eyes. He placed his kand upon her brow and drew her head gently back until it rested on his arm then pressed his lips upon those of the trembling girl. She trembles no longer, but drinks deep of the draught and clings to him with a passionate cry.

Then, suddenly she drew away from him and stood, her neck and face suffused with burning blushes and her bosom heaving with emotion.

"Slim Chickens Girl"

EXT. THE SLIM CHICKEN PARKING LOT - EVENING

Two schmucks, RICARDO and AMIR, pace around in the Slim Chickens parking lot. We start in the middle of their conversation.

AMIR

Ricardo, the Slim Chickens girl is the woman I want marry.

RICARDO

You saw her once like four months

ago.

AMIR

Love goes beyond your pea-brained

values.

RICARDO

I... whatever, man. Do you even have a plan or are you just gonna freeball it.

AMIR

Freeball?

RICARDO

Like going commando.

AMIR

Commando?

RICARDO

Like no underwear.

AMIR

No underwear?

RICARDO

Like freeballin'.

AMIR

No underwear!

RICARDO

Yeah, but you like understand now.

AMIR

I'm just confused on how my current lack of underwear has anything to do with my plan.

RICARDO

Freeballin' is like improv. Wait--Amir did you say you're not wearing underwear.

AMIR

Stuff happens man, I don't know what to tell you.

RICARDO

You're really going to talk the Slim Chickens girl with no underwear.

AMIR

I gotta do what I gotta do.

RICARDO

Do you need a pair?

AMIR

I could use a pair.

RICARDO

Do you wanna borrow mine?

AMIR

What?

RICARDO

Just in case you get lucky.

AMIR

I'm gonna get lucky in underwear?
RICARDO

It'll be a little weird if you

don't have any underwear.

AMIR

Silly Ricardo, the Slim Chickens girl will understand.

RICARDO

Well let's get this done. There's a mob hit out for me and-

Ricardo sneezes.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

-I'm freezing to death.

AMIR

My heart is too warm for the cold. It beats and beats and beats till I'm all warm inside.

RICARDO

Yeah but wha-what about the mob hit?

AMIR

I thought we were talking about me. RICARDO

You're right. So what's the plan?

AMIR

I'm gonna do a dance.

RICARDO

In the Slim Chickens?

AMIR

Yeah, in the Slim Chickens.

RICARDO

It's tiny in the Slim Chickens. (pointing into the window)
You're gonna hurt that little boy by jumping on him or something.

AMIR

(contemplatively)

This is true.

RICARDO

You know any of these cars can be the mob trying the nail me for the last time.

AMIR

Ricardo, it's really selfish to make this whole thing about you.

RICARDO

Bu-

AMIR

This is my big moment and you're whining about death and Vito Corleone.

RICARDO

They actually don't like *The*Godfather that much. I tried doing an impression to cheer them up and they did not--

AMIR

So if I can't dance what can I do?
RICARDO

We can go inside to think about this. It's cold.

AMIR

I'll look like a coward in there.

RICARDO

Oh and you don't look like a coward shivering in front of a big window.

AMIR

See you've got the perception all wrong.

(pointing to the window) To them, I'm security.

RICARDO

You're security?

AMIR

I'm doing my best.

RICARDO

So you'll keep me from getting nailed.

AMIR

Well you aren't necessarily in the restaurant, are you?

RICARDO

But I am your only friend, Amir.

AMIR

Hey, Counselor Cockburn says that you can't bring that up without my medication readily available.

RICARDO

I'm sorry.

Ricardo sneezes.

RICARDO (CONT'D)

Well you have to figure out a new plan.

AMIR

I could reenact the scene from Casablanca.

RICARDO

"We'll always have Paris." You really shouldn't do that.

AMIR

Why not?

RICARDO

What're you gonna say?

(Humphrey Bogart

impression)

We'll always have Slim Chickens.

AMIR

That sounds right.

RICARDO

We could do better.

AMIR

What if I read an excerpt from Catcher in the Rye?

RICARDO

I mean if you want a restraining order.

AMIR

There's romance. Remember the hooker?

RICARDO

There's nothing romantic about that book.

AMIR

Yeah you're right I just wanted to win the argument.

RICARDO

Y'know what, Amir?

AMIR

What?

RICARDO

What if you just walked in and talked to her?

AMIR

Like all nice and stuff?

RICARDO

I would hope so.

AMIR

That sounds like a good plan.

Ricardo and Amir strut into the restaurant. Amir scopes out the room, before walking up to a male cashier.

AMIR (CONT'D)

Do you know where the Slim Chickens girl is?

MALE CASHIER

Who is that?

AMIR

She's--y'know--the girl from the Slim Chickens.

MALE CASHIER

Can you describe her.

Ricardo sneezes, no elbow, no nothing. Amir and the cashier give him a disgusted look.

AMIR

I don't know. She's pretty and stuff.

MALE CASHIER

Oh her? She's been gone for like three months ago.

Ricardo and Amir give each other a look.

FIN.

-The Brothers Bazan (Liam and Sandro)
Original Idea by Mercedes Gonzales-Bazan



-Miri Künzler

"The End of Poetry"

Enough of osseous and chickadee and sunflower and snowshoes, maple and seeds, samara and shoot, enough chiaroscuro, enough of thus and prophecy and the stoic farmer and faith and our father and 'tis of thee, enough of bosom and bud, skin and god not forgetting and star bodies and frozen birds, enough of the will to go on and not go on or how a certain light does a certain thing, enough of the kneeling and the rising and the looking inward and the looking up, enough of the gun, the drama, and the acquaintance's suicide, the long-lost letter on the dresser, enough of the longing and the ego and the obliteration of ego, enough of the mother and the child and the father and the child and enough of the pointing to the world, weary and desperate, enough of the brutal and the border, enough of can you see me, can you hear me, enough I am human, enough I am alone and I am desperate, enough of the animal saving me, enough of the high water, enough sorrow, enough of the air and its ease,

I am asking you to touch me.

Ada Limón (1976 -)
The current United States Poet Laureate

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